

SABREJET CLASSICS

A Publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

Volume 23, Number 2

Summer 2016



► Inside: 2017 Reunion info & Registration, Fighter Pilots Diary, Bob Hoover story, more!

SabreJet Classics

Published by:
The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

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Larry Davis

Front Cover:

The F-86F, actually a Canadair-built airplane, that Bob Hoover flew at the Reno Air Races in February 1980. (credit - Mick Roth)

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SabreJet Classics is published by the F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn. The F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn. is a non-profit, veterans organization, with membership limited to individual pilots who have flown the F-86 Sabre aircraft. The goals of the Association is to "perpetuate the history of the F-86 Sabre, the units to which it was assigned, and the men that flew the Sabre"; and to perpetuate an accurate, patriotic portrayal of our national, military, and Air Force history and heritage. If you are NOT a member, but meet the membership qualifications, you are invited to join. Application forms are available on our website or at the Las Vegas address. Dues are \$25/year, \$50/3 years. SabreJet Classics is published solely for the private use of association members. No portion of SabreJet Classics may be used or reprinted without permission from the President of the Association, and the Editor of the magazine. SabreJet Classics is published three times per year. Extra copies of an issue can be ordered at \$3.00/copy. Subscriptions for non-members are available at \$25/year. All payments should be made payable to "F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn.", and sent to the Las Vegas address.

The President's notebook

To all you Sabre pilots and many of your wives' and family members who read the Sabre Jet Classics, I am more than pleased to still be able to spend a little time and talk with you. After our reunion last April, we were looking at two more years before our next reunion. As usual, at that time, it seemed a long way off with some serious challenges we had to face. Getting our post reunion Sabre Jet Classics published and out to all of you became a monumental effort and thanks to Larry Davis's doggedness and tenacity he got it out and it was a beauty though it was somewhat bitter sweet. The "Sweet Side" was the magazine and all the good info inside. The "Bitter Side" was the decision that has been lurking for some time: how much longer can the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association remain in being? That decision was made and the order to Stand Down the Association at the end of our 2017, 21st reunion was, with sad heart, made. I pretty much went into the detail and rationale for that decision in the last issue and it is time to move on .

Before I go any further, I have a huge apology to make concerning the comments I wrote in "Association Breaking News" in SJC 23-1. In the first paragraph I said that Bill Deming , Frank Satterfield and Warren Thompson put on the first F-86 Sabre Pilot's reunion in 1981. I was correct in naming Satterfield and Thompson. I was not correct in naming Bill Deming, whoever he was. The real Bill is the still active and current "Bill Demint." Bill, my humblest apologies. Come to the reunion. I owe a drink. Now, on to a little usual Association business.

There is one admin item that needs to be addressed as a result of our Stand Down. That is dues. As many of you well know and have taken advantage of is our three years dues for \$50.00 policy. As you can see we will not be in business for three more years, so, one year's dues payments of \$25.00 each is the way to go. By the time you read this issue, the Association will be down to its last year. Speaking of dues, I'm sure some of you have decided to drop your subscriptions as a result of the Stand Down. That is understandable, but; there is still some good news. Our efforts to get more of your stories for our last few issues has produced great results. Where last summer Larry was looking at being able to publish only one, maybe two more issues, he feels strongly he can publish the normal three per year and possibly a final post reunion issue. So, if you want be on-board and receive three to four more issues with great stories and attend our reunion, your dues must be current! Make sure your check you Classics mailing label that shows your expiration date. Since the last reunion, of over one thousand members still on the rolls, we have received just twenty three renewed dues payments as of 1 April. Now, on to business. Our Association policy has always been not to

penalize a member for late dues payments. That still stands.

Getting this issue, SJC 23-2 out is a big move. Being one year out from our reunion in April of 2017, it was important to get as much reunion info as we can to you so you can see what we have in store for a finale. That meant a lot of early planning, waving fingers in the wind, and betting on the outcome. With a bit of all those and some good luck, things are shaping up for a great reunion.

To whet your appetite a bit for Reunion "21," cast your gaze at this beautiful shot of the Planes of Fame Air Museum F-86F recently painted in its new 335th Chiefs war colors as "Jolly Roger" in honor of Cliff Jolly and his seven victories. Planes of Fame has agreed to fly it to our reunion. More on that in our reunion news.

Finally, to help us get a good idea of how many of you think you will plan to attend our last reunion in Las Vegas, a short email or snail mail to me (alleypoop3@cox.net or our Association address on inside front cover) would help a lot. Also, let me know if your wife, family members or friends will be attending.

As a closing note, on being able to get back on track to publish three more SabreJet Classics this final year, I want to thank those of you who stepped up to bat and sent stories to Larry. Fighter pilots can always be counted on to come through during the crunches.

Cheers to all.

**God Bless America! God Bless Our Troops!
God Bless Sabre Pilots!**

J.R. Alley
President



▲ M/Gen Tommy Williams flying P.O.F.'s F-86 in a Heritage Flt Demo • Credit P.O.F. Air Museum

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F-86 ASSOCIATION HATS

We still have a limited number of F-86 Association hats available. The tail flash will be the checker board of the 51st Wg.

\$15⁰⁰
PER HAT
PLUS \$7.00
FOR SHIPPING



If ordering more than three hats, another \$7.00 will be required for S/H.
Send your check to the Association address listed on the back page.

from the *Editor*



Hi guys! HmMMM, what have we here? A new SabreJet Classics. I must have fibbed a bit in the last issue as I said it would be the final issue, or at least it could be. But lo and behold, we got in enough material for another issue of YOUR magazine.

Thanks to some well-placed begging and pleading by President JR Alley, the stories started coming in. And they were good and interesting stories to boot. I'm sure you all will like the "Fighter Pilots Diary, as well as the excerpted story from Bob Hoover. And all the others. Many thanks to everyone who helped make THIS issue possible.

And to those who sent in stories that did not appear in this issue, keep your eyes peeled for still another issue of YOUR magazine in the Fall. And we might even have enough to come out with an issue in the early Spring of 2017.

One of the major highlights of this issue are the details and Registration Form for the 2017 Reunion of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association. Which will in all probability, be the final reunion. It was a great run.

I for one am very happy to have been associated with all you guys over the past 20+ years. I was honored back in 1992 when Hank Buttlemann asked me to be the editor of SabreJet Classics. It was my honor then and is my honor today, to say that was associated with the greatest pilots organization EVER!

I'm really looking forward to meeting with all you guys again in Las Vegas next April. **SEE YOU THEN!**

Larry Davis
editor

SABRES AROUND THE WORLD

Only one nation received the F-86L Sabre other than USAF stateside squadrons. That nation was Thailand. They received about 25 F-86L airframes WITHOUT the Semi-Automatic Ground Equipment, i.e. SAGE. However, they had the longer wing of the F-86L and were equipped to fire the AIM-9 Sidewinder missile, which USAF F-86D/L aircraft could not. (credit - USAF)



Folded Wings

Simon K. Andersen ~ September 5th, 2015
Daniel J. Bigelow ~ August 11th, 2014
Drury Callahan ~ February 25th, 2016
Frederick J. Cornelius ~ February 24th, 2013
Anthony Cvitanovich ~ February 5th, 2016
Donald B. Durbin ~ October 18th, 2015
John L. France ~ October 15th, 2015
LtGen. W.W. "Bones" Marshall ~ September 19th, 2015
Francis W. 'Frank' Meyer ~ January 16th, 2016
Claude S. Puckett ~ January 22nd, 2015
Thomas C. Smith ~ January 3rd, 2016
William J. Sternhagen ~ November 6th, 2015
William 'Bill' George Swanson ~ November 19th, 2015
Louis Testaquzza ~ September 18, 2015
Robert Watson ~ April 4th, 2016



The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

Boots Blesse Presentation



On June 25, 2015, J.R. Alley, Dan Druen, Dan "Firecan" Walsh, Bob Smith and Bob Shawhan, on behalf of our Sabre Pilots Association, presented to Nellis's USAF Weapons School, the limited edition lithograph of Boots Blesse's, tenth victory "There Goes Number Ten"

(in which Boots and his wingman near the end of their patrol, low on fuel, had just fought off two attacking Migs and damaging one. Boots sent his wingman home to safety while he fought off two more Migs. During his climb out, Boots spotted another single Mig. Even though down to 900lbs. of fuel, attacked and shot down the Mig for his number ten. Too low on fuel to return to base, Boots ejected over the North Korean coast, was rescued by "Dumbo" and returned to base ending his tour.)

A room filling crowd of 433rd Satan's Angels weapons school instructors and students in flight suits as we were included in there informal Patch Night Graduation celebration. An impressive list of dignitaries was present including the PACAF Commander, General Lori Robinson, the USAF Warfare Center Commander, M/Gen Jay Sylvester, the 57th Wing Commander, B/Gen Michael Short and the Weapons School Commandant Col. Michael Drowley. Col. Gary "Tonka" Rose and L/Col. Daniel "lager" Lehoski, both highly instrumental to our Nellis day reunion events were present. Lieutenant Colonel "Burner" Brown, 433rd Weapons Squadron Commander, was the master of ceremonies and received the lithograph. The litho will be placed in a prominent place in the "No Guts No Glory Lounge." It will add significantly to embracing Boots Blesse's legend at the Weapons School. The following photos were taken by the Weapons School Editor/Publicist, Susan Garcia and our own Association Director, Bob Smith.



▲ J.R. describes "There Goes Number 10"



▲ J.R. Presents Litho to "Burner"



▲ J.R. Presents Boots Hero Cockpit Pictures



▲ Dan presents Photos of the 1955 USAF Tactics Team (Boots, Pappy Lyle, Don Pascoe and Dan)



▲ J.R. with General Robinson



▲ Firecan with General Robinson



▲ B/Gen Michael Short, J.R. and "Tonka" Rose



▲ "Lager" Lehoski, J.R., Tonka & Bob Shawhan

40 MINUTES OF STARK TERROR

Excerpts taken from R. A. "Bob" Hoover's book "FOREVER FLYING"

PART 1

One of the first test flights I flew at North American was in a great plane called the F-86 Sabre Jet. It was a swept-wing, single seat jet fighter that would achieve great fame in the Korean War. Its kill ratio (number of planes shot down versus number of F-86s lost) was almost unbelievable; fourteen to one. The F-86 would become best known for its agility.

A short time after I joined North American, I tested the F-86D that had the horizontal tail located on the bottom of the fuselage. This was a test bed for the future F-100, which would feature a similar configuration. As soon as I became airborne, the yaw damper failed, causing a full rudder deflection. At the same time, the fire warning lights came on. My brain went on red alert. I focused on my options.

It's hard to imagine, but the Los Angeles international airport had only two runways at that time. They were only five thousand feet long, ending on the west at Sepulveda Boulevard where a tunnel is now located, and at Aviation Boulevard on the east.

When I developed problems in the F-86, my main concern was how much speed I would need to maintain control with the high yaw angle and no rudder control, and how to stop it on the short runway without blasting into evening traffic. I concluded that because of the maximum gross weight, I would lose control at normal speeds. Timing was critical because of those fire warning lights staring me in the face.

One of the design characteristics of the F-86 D test bed was that the dive brakes were located on the top of the fuselage instead of the lower section. When the brakes were extended, the plane pitched down and not up as would be the case with the conventional F-86.

I called flight test and asked what kind of stall speed



▲ Bob at our 2011 Reunion at 89 years of age
Photo credit - Walt Burkett

could be recommended at maximum gross weight. That was important because I had to be way above that in order to land.

With emergency equipment converging on the runway, I began the decent. I was concerned about landing with the nose of the plane yawed to the right because of the failed rudder. I extended the dive brakes instinctively over the railroad tracks parallel to Aviation Boulevard on the east side of the runway. It seemed as if the bottom fell out. The F-86 slammed into the ground two feet short of the lip of the runway.

I knew I'd hit hard, but I couldn't believe one of the wheels had been torn off. Then the wheel bounced right up in front of me! The strut ran along the concrete. The F-86 was out of control and slid off the runway. The plane was clobbered.

Fortunately, I was not hurt. A fine gentleman named Ray Rice was the vice president at the North American Plant. I decided to face the music and went directly to his office.

"Ray" I said, "your looking at the dumbest test pilot who ever lived. There was no excuse for loosing that airplane. I knew those dive brakes pitched down. I just blew it."

To my relief, both the company and the Air Force exonerated me with regard to the incident. I would fly another day for North American. I was even more determined now to be the very best test pilot possible.

PART 2

The first models of the F-86 were designed with boosted controls which would be compared to the power steering in an automobile. However, when power steering goes out in a car, it is difficult to turn the wheels at low speed. It's the opposite in an airplane. It is easily controlled at low speed and runs out of control at high speed.

Engineers went to work on the problem. They fashioned a complicated system of electronics and hydraulics with spring bungees using a conventional stick in the cockpit to control the series of mechanisms. This experimental system was scheduled to be incorporated into thousands of aircraft.

In November of 1950, engineering had designed and demonstrated a new flight control system on the F-86. This was to be the first irreversible artificial "feel" system. The pilot control manipulations gave signals to the electric and hydraulic systems that moved the airplane's control surfaces.

We had adequate control at low speeds, but the aerodynamic forces increased the faster the airplane flew. As airspeeds increased, it became more difficult for the pilot to physically manipulate the flight controls.

I had taken a few rides in the airplane that featured the new systems, and everything seemed in order.

Two days later, I took another flight test. As soon as the landing gear was retracted, the nose of the airplane pitched straight up. The airplane was out of control. I pushed forward on the stick with all my strength, but it could not be moved fore or aft. Somehow both the normal and emergency systems had failed.

The F-86 then stalled, started to spin, and headed straight down. It was difficult to keep my bearings, but then the rudder control, which was mechanical, permitted me to stop the spin. The horizontal tail was free-floating and completely out of control, but the plane recovered, barely missing the ground. The plane climbed right back up, and the same process started again. I called a Mayday, unsure of what response would come next.

For the next forty minutes, it was stark terror. I was so certain that a crash was inevitable that I ask Los Angeles Airport to stop all air traffic. An airliner that was ready to take off on the other runway was told to hold his position, leaving one clear runway for me in the event I could regain control.

I went through all sorts of gyrations to figure a way to gain control, I played with the landing gear, the flaps, the speed brakes, and power settings, all to no avail. "What else is there?" I ask myself as precious minutes scurried by.

Rip Hewitt, a fellow test pilot who was flying an F-86 near LAX at the time, recalls my precarious predicament this way:

"After Bob took off on runway 25 left, that F-86 went straight up and I knew he was in deep trouble. Quickly, he tried a hammerhead stall in an effort to right the plane. That occurred near the old Pan American hangar and he missed that hangar by about twenty feet. Bob kept trying hammerhead stalls, and he would gain twenty to twenty-five feet each time, but it was touch and go over LAX until he decided he could fly off toward the desert,"

Joe Lynch was flying formation with me as I approached the dry lake bed (Edwards Air Force Base). It was eleven miles long and cracked in the early part of summer. Now, after the first rains, it was smooth as a tabletop. I had been increasing the power in an effort to get the nose up for landing. Joe had advised me to bail out before I set up the approach. Now he was telling me that I was going 240 knots and wouldn't survive the landing at that speed.

"Bob, you eager bastard. I begged you to get out of it," Joe

bellowed. Those were the last words I thought I would ever hear. They came just before touchdown.

Instead of the hard landing I expected, the swept wings on the F-86 picked up ground effect (a cushion of air between the wings and the ground). To my surprise, I experienced one of the smoothest landings I've ever made even though I had no real control of the airplane.

The F-86 rolled completely across the lake bed and up to the main base. Jack Ridley, my old engineer buddy from the X-1 program, witnessed the landing and told me, "Bob that is the hardest flight I've ever listened to. What a miracle."

Jack reached in the cockpit of the F-86 and felt the stick. "I can't believe it, Bob. It feels like it's in concrete."

The condition of my hand confirmed what Jack had said. I had torn the flesh between my index finger and thumb while pushing hard on the stick, trying to get the nose down.

Later, after some further inspection, I found that I couldn't have ejected even if I had wanted to. The ground crew had not pulled the safety pin on the ejection seat. I'd have gone down with the F-86.

People have asked me over the years what's the most terrifying ride I've had. There have been many, but none scarier than the one in that F-86.

PART 3

Those early days at North American were always eventful. I had a narrow squeak in an F-86 D when we were testing a new rocket system over the Inyo Kern rocket-firing range. The plane, dubbed the Sabre Dog, was equipped with twenty-four 2.75-inch rockets. These were in a pod that was recessed into the fuselage under the cockpit. The rocket pod extension was automatic when the rockets were fired.

The flight test called for firing all of the rockets at the same time. When I squeezed the trigger to fire the rockets, the pod did not extend. Bud Page was flying the chase plane with high-speed cameras to capture the firing.

Even though the rockets were not loaded with warheads, they fired right through the nose of the plane. The plane became

one big ball of fire. The nose was severely damaged. The engine fire-warning lights illuminated as the engine began to vibrate violently. Then it exploded.

I was at forty-two thousand feet above the desert. I called a Mayday and headed for the Inyo Kern China Lake Naval Air Station. The flight controls were operating on the emergency electrical system, but the battery power wouldn't last long. Then I'd have no way of controlling the F-86.

The bright blue sky tumbled past me as I tried to think clearly. To conserve battery power, I turned off everything except the emergency flight controls. Bud Page confirmed the seriousness of the damage before a shortage of fuel required him to turn back.

Good fortune prevailed and I made it to Inyo Kern. I decided not to use the battery-powered flaps. Without the flaps extended, the landing speed would be higher, but I'd have to take that chance. I braced myself for a hard landing. Fortunately it was just the opposite on a dirt and sand road there in the desert.

After coming to a standstill, I snapped the electrical canopy switch to the open position and nothing happened. There was no battery power left. Had I used the flaps, there would not have been sufficient battery power to land the airplane.

My hands had a viselike grip on the controls. I flexed them out as I relaxed and assessed my situation. I realized I had no radio communications, and I was stuck in the cockpit. I didn't even know if anyone had seen me land. Then I saw another F-86 overhead. I knew one of my fellow test pilots had reported my location.

For several minutes, I considered ejecting the canopy. However, I was concerned that the ejection seat might fire with it.

In the meantime, the heat from the greenhouse effect with the big bubble canopy and the hot sun built up the temperature in the cockpit. Had anyone been able to see me shed my flight clothing, they might have thought I was a contortionist. A Navy team arrived about an hour later. I was nearly naked when they rescued me, but they didn't seem to notice as they handed me a canteen. I don't remember when a drink of cold water tasted so good.

The Day The Engine Quit

By J.R. Alley



A single engine pilot develops a love for the extra performance provided by a single engine airplane, whether being a Piper, Cessna, Beachcraft or a jet fighter like the F-86 Sabre. Over years of flying, pilots can tell many stories and tales of flying those beautiful birds and how much they love to fly with one engine. They all dread that possibility when that engine might quit right after take off with no runway remaining to set it back down on and stop. Very few options are left for the pilot. A hard turn back to the runway can result in over controlling, stalling the aircraft and crashing. Gliding straight ahead is considered the best option or in the case of an ejection seat equipped fighter – eject!



▲ J.R. after a Flight over cold Alaska Waters

Before continuing with my story of that very eventful day, let me give you some background of flying in my training days that led me to make the decision I made The Day the Engine Quit. That dated back to my pilot training days when I was taking my transition check flight in a T-33 with a Stan-Eval pilot, Gus Tyler, at Webb AFB in the summer of 1960, fifty five years ago. We had just completed the standard type SFO at the Webb AFB auxiliary field and on the go, just after I raised the gear and flaps, Gus called out "Simulated Flameout." Holy Shit I thought! At that speed and altitude, I answered with, "I would pull up and eject." That was not the answer Gus wanted to hear and he responded with, "Get this F-ing bird back on the ground!" After a rapid "Yes Sir" I bent the bird around the best I could at that low airspeed, made the reversal OK and saw I was going to have to delay the flaps and gear to the last moment to make the runway. Gus did, in the process, tell me if I did it right I should make it. As we glided closer to the end of the runway, I began to feel we could make it and I lowered partial flaps. I dropped the gear as the end of the runway was about to go under the nose. We touched down just beyond the end and continued on with the touch and go. Fortunately, Gus was satisfied and I proceeded with the rest of the check flight. I passed, but I couldn't believe what he had just made me do. After that went around the flight room after debrief, I don't recall any other student in our flight having to do that and I could hardly believe Gus would have stayed with me a long as he did before he said to take it around.

Sadly, about eight years later while I was in Thailand during my combat tour in the Phantom, Intel reported that Gus Tyler had been shot down. He evaded in the jungle for several days with an occasional radio contact, but all contact was finally lost and Gus was never heard from again. I still, occasionally, look at my class book and can see Gus's picture with his big smile. I can't help but reflect back to the seed he planted deep within my fighter pilot mind about the day that engine may quit right after takeoff in a single engine bird. With that ghost of a thought always in the back of my mind while flying the Sabre another event happened. I hadn't practiced a simulate engine failure after takeoff for some time. I cannot explain why, but just one week before the actual engine failure, I had the fuel, the time and I practiced a couple of simulated engine failures shortly after takeoff.



Gus Tyler

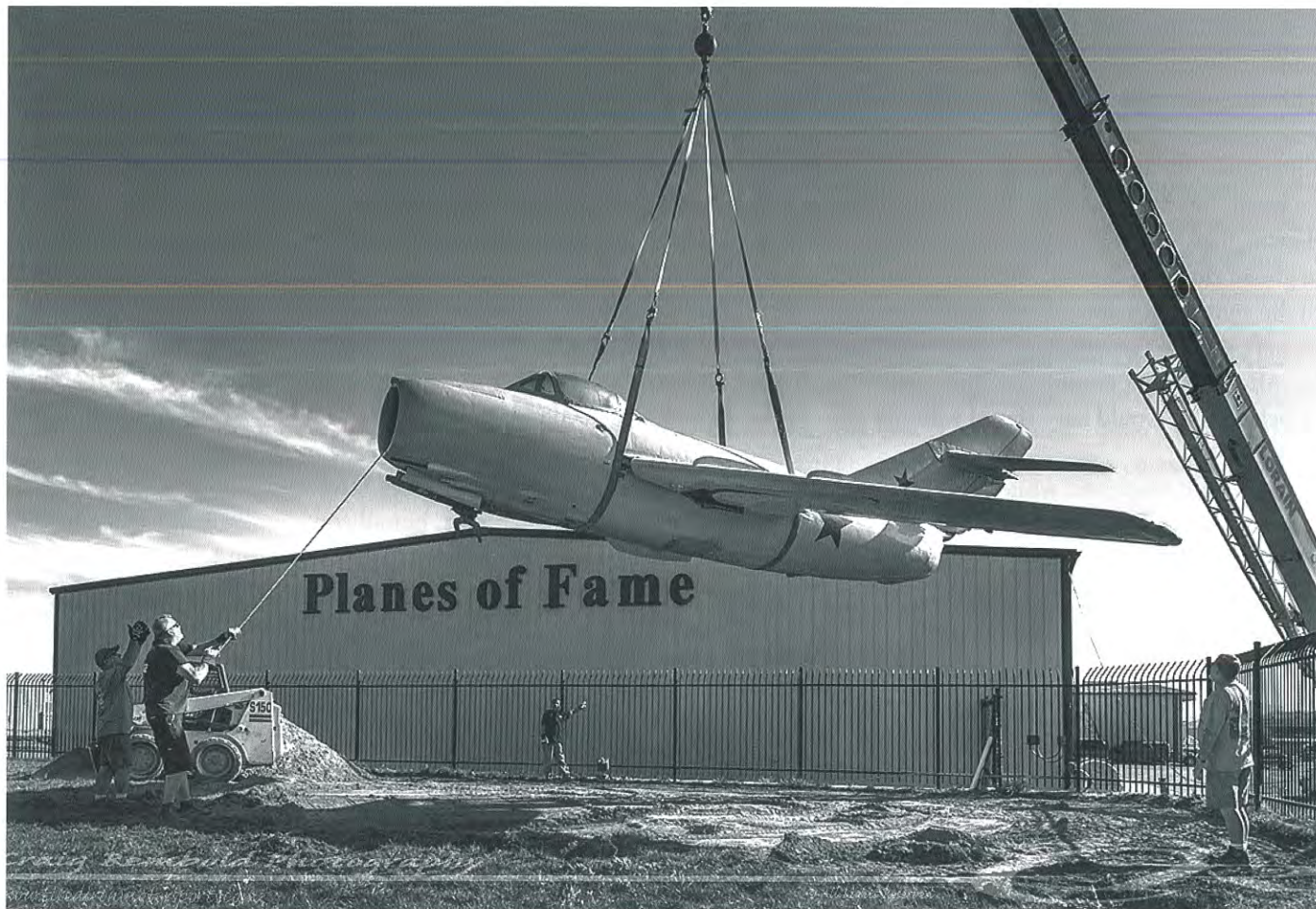
Now, on with the story. Bright and early one morning, I had completed all my pre-takeoff checks for a one hour flight in a Canadair MK 5 F-86E Sabre I was flying that day. After the engine run up and all engine instruments checked good, I released brakes and rapidly accelerated for lift off. Once airborne, I raised the landing gear, accelerated further and raised the flaps. Just a few seconds later while climbing through about 300 feet, the exhaust gas temperature pegged at over 1000 degrees centigrade and the RPM rapidly dropped from 99% to below 30%. It was instant decision time. I had to shut down the engine quickly before it exploded. I had an ejection seat, old North American seat, and I could try to zoom and eject and I might survive, I could crash land straight ahead, or I could turn back and hope to glide to the runway I just took off from. I loved flying the F-86 and I had all the confidence in what I could do with that fine and beautiful bird. I did not want to lose it. I decided to make it back to the runway. Because of my recent practice, my

continued on page 12

reaction time was split second. I pulled the nose up as steep as my airspeed, below 200 KIAS, would permit and I partially hammer headed a reversal turn back. Half way around the turn I felt confident that I had a good chance of making the runway if I delayed lowering my landing gear to the last few seconds. As I still had wind milling hydraulic pressure, I lowered the gear over the over-run, touched down on the first one hundred feet of the runway and rolled to a stop in front of the tower.

It all happened so quickly. The entire flight was just a few minutes and everything seemed to be in a blur. As I waited to be towed off the runway, a thousand thoughts rushed through my mind. The one that over shadowed all was the fact that I was flying the F-86 Sabre, one of the finest single engine fighter jets ever built and it saved my life. I, not long after that incident, was flying the F-100 Super Sabre. Had that happened to me flying the F-100, the thought would have never entered my mind to try and turn back to the runway. My only option for survival would have been to eject. Also, my thoughts went clear back to Gus Tyler and my check flight on that hot summer day out of Big Springs, Texas in 1960.

Reading my story, one might get the impression that was the only engine failure I had flying the Sabre. That was the only one shortly after takeoff. I had a couple during throttle accelerations during test hops at 40,000 ft. and an inadvertent shut down by a remote control pilot at a mid altitude. In all cases the trusty Sabre air started as advertised.



▲ The MiG-15 is lowered to its spot at the new Planes of Fame Air Museum's Korean War memorial. The F-86 Pilots Association has donated a total of \$10,000 to keep the project moving along. The MiG is in place and the foundation for the F-86 pedestal is finished.

A Fighter Pilot's Diary

2nd/Lt. Robert S. Seal



I arrived in Misawa, Japan, Saturday, November 13, 1954 fresh from Nellis, AFB, Advanced Gunnery Training in the North American F-86 Sabre. I'd just turned twenty-three years old. This was my first assignment. I joined my unit, the 336th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, the "Fabulous Rocketeers". One of the three squadrons comprising the 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing, the others being the 334th and 335th stationed at Chitose, on Hokkaido Island, Japan.

2nd Lt. Jimmy Coats, from Harlingen, Texas, and I processed through Fuchu Military Installation outside Tokyo, and were both "new heads" in the squadron. The following are excerpts from a diary I was keeping.

MISAWA

Saturday, January 1, 1955, 14:30 hours.

Commander's Reception at the club. Our new C.O., Major Bruce Carr led the way and our squadron ran the "gauntlet". Base Commander, Col. J. P. Randolph was looking chipper. Randolph is quite a sporty dresser on and off the golf links near the base. After greeting everyone we moved to the punch table where champagne was being served. (The reception was a success by all standards.)

Major Carr came to us from the F-86D; 4th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (All-Weather) next door, where he was Ops Officer. Major Carr considers himself a day fighter pilot, and is overjoyed to be back in fighters. Maj. Carr is an ace from WWII, with 19 kills flying P-51 Mustangs out of England.

Started my mustache today!

Sunday, January 2nd

14:00 - Today I am informed that I have lost the top "Eisenhower Jacket" to my blue gabardines in the laundry fire Thursday night - just great! Japanese cleaners have a problem with their laundries burning down. I understand that they use JP-4 as a cleaning agent that they get from the base. Clothes smell like it too.

Monday, January 3rd

06:30 - We were snowed in this morning - about twelve inches fell last night and the snowplows worked all night keeping the runway open. The word is that Misawa gets about 150 inches of snowfall in winter.

09:00 - Toured the AC/W and ACDC outfits to get the lowdown on air surveillance and our job.

Capt. Mark Halphide and Lt. Webster went to Nagoya to pick up our other T-Bird (we have two) which was being repaired. Maybe now with two T-Birds we can start checking out the new pilots. The day was beautiful for flying - but none of us "new sports" got up.



▲ Lt Bob Seal in Korea 1955.

Tuesday, January 4th

16:00 - Officer Call, and election of new Board of Officers for the Club. We (336th FIS) solidly backed some troops from the fighter elements, trying to get ourselves established on this base run by dependents. (Results unknown). The 336th is only six weeks on this location. A 50 cent buffet followed, but I was unable to enjoy it since my Japanese language class started at 18:00.

18:00 - Language class was interesting, and instructor Osawa Kuyi is sincere man.

Wednesday, January 5th

06:00 - Reported to the flight line for check ride in T-Bird. (Lockheed T-33) Snow flurries prevented mission until 10:04. Airborne with Lt. Bill Curry, (my check pilot) in back seat. Was surprised I remembered as many procedures as I did. Visibility was restricted by weather. The runway was covered in hard pack snow and icy patches. My pattern was only fair; we shot five low approaches and one full stop - very long landing.

Worst event of the ride. I floated and floated. When I finally touched down I was slithering and sliding - no way was I going to stop this bird. I came to a bare spot of concrete near the overrun and we stopped. I scared Bill Curry and myself. Will have another ride.

15:00 - Sudden snow storm forced four of our combat ready pilots to land their birds at Matsushima AB130 NM south.

Lt's Marvin Lindsey, Jackie Moothart, and Gus Holliday got T-Bird rides today. (Fellow "new sports")

Thursday, January 6th

07:30 - Reported to the line, but weather is bad - visibility ¼ mile, blowing snow, brisk wind. Several "new sports" are scheduled for F-86 chase rides if weather breaks. None got up.

continued on page 14

11:00 – Pay Day – received \$193 one months pay, sans flight pay, since I haven't flown enough. Sometimes wish I was in North Africa where flying weather is better.

18:00 – Attended language class. Things are getting complicated.

Friday, January 14th

07:30 – Had my second chase ride in the Fox-86 with Lt. Jim Chapman. I flew lead and we remained under the ragged 3000' overcast. My under slung fuel tanks leaked cutting our mission short. (1:00 hour). A strong wind from the south caused me to misjudge two SFO's. Our runway is 28 – 10. The prevailing wind is from the West most of the time.

Saturday, January 15th

08:00 – Reported to the line but did not fly. Some of the F-84 jocks (newly assigned to our squadron) got their first of the "Le Sabre" today. We formerly had Republic F-84's stationed here with a nuclear mission, but that operation was phased out.

18:00 – 20:00 – Squadron party for Lt. Haugen, one of the "old heads", who is going stateside soon to instruct at Nellis. Everyone was in a party mood, and things got wild with the usual songs and smashing of glasses.

Sunday, January 16th

11:00 – Went to church with. Our Protestant preacher is from the Deep South which is evidenced by his speech.

Weather is partly cloudy and cold, with a strong wind.

Monday, January 17th

06:45 – Third chase ride with Lt. Billy Britton. Sky was broken overcast at 9000', clear above, and we climbed to 30M. I flew wing for the first time since leaving Nellis. I really worked up a sweat staying with him. Billy was trying to stick it to me. We shot an ADF and a GCA which worked out very well.

Tuesday, January 18th

08:00 - Reported to the line but did not fly. Weather bad – low ceilings and poor visibility. There is usually a hole directly over our base and we are enclosed in a ring of snow showers all the time. This "sucker hole" opens and closes at intervals, and we must play it "cool".

Saturday, January 22nd

07:30 – Reported to the line to observe 12 ship fly-by performed by the "old heads" in our Squadron. The day was clear at this hour, but became overcast shortly. However, the formation work was impeccable as they made three sweeps of the field at 1500' – much too high – but the base C.O. was in the tower. The F-86 Dogs, led by L/Col. Rigney, were also doing their stuff – they had a sixteen ship "gaggle". Our base B-26 photo plane tried to get pictures, but couldn't keep up.

18:00 – Western Jamboree at the Club. (Hee-haw) The wives sponsored this box dinner affair as a fund raiser for the "March of Dimes". Some food boxes sold for as much as \$40.00.

23:00 – Picked the base at "Mama Sans" with Lt. Bob Hohtanz at the piano until I had blisters. Great time!

Sunday, January 23rd

11:00 - Church with Lindsey and Taylor.

16:00 – Met a sweet girl – Dee Baker, one of the dependents (18 yr). Her father is a Major with the Artillery stationed here. He makes terrific Manhattans and Martinis. She and I saw Misawa beat Johnson AFB, (a base near Tokyo), at basketball.

Monday, January 24th

08:00 – Reported to the line and was scheduled for two flights, but neither came about. There were snow showers in the morning plus our outfit was put on 15 minute alert (Cocoa status) for the remainder of the day, so that left the "new sports" out of the flying.

Maj. Carr led a secret mission today.

Tuesday, January 25th

We reported to the line and five of us got up solo. The weather was overcast with ceilings at 3000' – with BINOVC (breaks in the overcast). Had a good flight and made a high speed pass on the field at 1100', 400knots. The old bird was just idling along at 95%.

This flight enabled most of the new troops to get caught up on flying time so we will receive our past flight pay in Feb.

Friday, January 28th

08:00 – I spent most of the morning in mobile control.
16:00 – My stateside baggage arrived today. Everything is in good shape.

19:00 – "Sayonara Party" for departing pilots, Bill Curry (Lowery AFB), Joseph Pizzicardi (George AFB). It was a nice blast and Base CO, Col. Randolph ("Randy") was on hand. He and Bruce Carr flew together today.



▲ 336th FIS CO Major Bruce Carr meets Ops Officer Capt. Ed Thomas and Lt. Bob Seal on return from a patrol near MiG Alley, at K-14 in May 1955.

Saturday, January 29th

07:00 – On the line and some of the pilots are airborne. Snow has started to melt and the day is fairly warm. Slush on the runway is hazardous on take off and especially on landing.

10:23 – An F-86 Dog taxies out on a hot scramble – he takes off down wind. As the aircraft became airborne twenty feet of flames spurted out of the engine exhaust. The 86 Dog has an afterburner for additional thrust, but this was way more flame than that and we realized he had an engine fire. In the remaining 2500' of runway, the pilot punched off his drop tanks, popped his brake chute, and slid to a safe halt. The under slung tanks burned, but the A/C was in good shape. The pilot was unharmed.

15:30 – Lt. Ken Ewing lost control of his F-84 on the after landing roll hitting a pile of slush which sent him spiraling end around end and he plowed into the snow banks tail end first. The snow banks on either side of the runway are 50 feet high. No injury.

Sunday, January 30th

12:45 – Had brunch at the club with Dee, Britton and Lindsey joined us and we lounged about the club for a while.

14:30 – Played handball at the gym for a couple hours to keep in good physical shape in case I have to bail out sometime.

Monday, January 31st

07:30 – Annual Flight Physical. Flight Surgeon is Dr. Campbell, a good man from Tennessee.

10:00 – The Squadron went on "stand down" because of heavy snow and slush. Visibility is ½ mile.

11:38 – I received per diem travel pay for my trip over here from the states; \$40.35. I'm rich.

Tuesday, February 1st

06:30 – Reported to the line for an A-4 mission with Lt. Jim Sims. We were "wheels in the well" at 07:50. Birds flew nicely to 43M (we were mach 0.85 all the way with external tanks) where we looked for bogies and worked practice intercepts on Husky Flight – without success. Sims and I tangled for a while with in-trail acrobatics at 27M and really pulled some "G's. Returning home to base I shot an SFO and my ailerons became bound up. Picture looked bad for a while. I made another SFL approach. During the round out, the left wing rose because of X-wind and I was unable to counter with left stick – trim was not effective either. Landing was successful. (A/C #780). I wrote it up.

10:15 – After my report, (without refueling) Maj. Carr took off in #780 to check it out – with near accident – declared emergency, and landed OK. I believe the problem was that the pneumatic charging hoses for the six 50 s in the nose section



▲ Margot, an exotic dancer in Japan, give Bob Seal an after-mission squeeze at Misawa in 1955.

had not been tied down after the hoses were disconnected. As a result the hoses were becoming tangled with the flight control cables. (Higher command had decided not to allow the fighter pilots to have the ability to charge their guns in flight at their own discretion. So the cables were disconnected).

Snow and ice still a problem. Runway conditions, are icy and ice chips are cutting the tires.

Wednesday, February 2nd

12:45 – Airborne on a local solo flight. The runway is clear of ice and such. A beautiful day with con area at 20M – 38M' so I proceeded to the A-4 area where a dog fight was clearly visible by the huge cons. I engaged two aircraft in a tail chase, performed acrobatics over Aomori and returned to field and shot a couple Simulated Flame Out approaches.

Friday, February 4th

08:00 – Reported to the line. Weather is wonderful – the greatest. Runway and ramp are clear of ice and snow. The first flights are already airborne.

08:30 – We sense an accident has occurred. L/Col. Rigney came over to our operations. (the CO of the 4th FIS) He said a mid-air collision had occurred with airplanes from the 336th. Maj. Carr and Capt. Harry Krig had already received the news and had bugged out to meet the returning aircraft. Every one of us watched eagerly from the flight shack as our birds came into the pattern. It was Capt. "Knobby" Walsh, and Lt's George Holliday, P.F. O'Hare, and Vic Bringle who were in the flight. O'Hare was leading the flight. So every one was speculating as to who went down since only three birds came back into the landing pattern. It was soon learned that Capt. Walsh had sheared off the horizontal stabilizer on the right side of O'Hare's airplane with the left front of his (Capt. Walsh's) air-

21st F-86 Sabre Pilots Association Reunion • April 23, 24 & 25, 2017

Gold Coast Hotel Casino, Las Vegas Nevada

The 21st and "FINAL" F-86 Sabre Pilots Association reunion will be held again at the Gold Coast Hotel/Casino in Las Vegas. Register early and avoid the rush. If you have to cancel please contact J.R. Alley at 702-363-9880 email alleyoop3@cox.net, Jerry Johnson at 702-458-7863 e-mail jerdot56@cox.net, or Pat Hughes at 702-870-4600 email hugpat@aol.com. You may cancel up to 10:00AM PST Saturday April 22th, 2017 and get a full refund. No refunds after that time unless due to a medical situation.

Making and canceling of room reservations is your responsibility. You can book your room reservation by calling the Gold Coast Hotel (888) 402-6278 or on-line, <http://goldcoastcasino.com/groups>. Identify yourself as a member of the "F-86 Sabre Pilots Association" and group code "AAIRF86". Cut-off date for room reservations using our guaranteed group discount, \$44 per day for premium rooms, \$36 per day for the Deluxe rooms, is March 20, 2017. After that date, rooms may cost more.

Being our final reunion, the Association has agreed to cut in half the registration fee and reduce all food and activity fees considerably. As an example: our banquet dinner cost for a combination "Filet and Chicken Breast" including gratuity and tax is \$56.00 per plate. Your cost is \$25.00. That does not include the wine we provide at each table. There will be pay-as-you-go bars. For our listening and dancing pleasure, Las Vegas's famous pianist and singer, Wes Winters who performed for us in 2015, has agreed to again perform for us after our dinner buffet on Monday evening. We are working on another tremendous entertainer for our Guys and Dolls luncheon as well as other guest speakers that will be of great interest to us. Additionally, the Super Sabre Society will be back at the Gold Coast with their reunion following ours as was the case prior to 2015.

The Planes of Fame Air Museum, Chino California, has agreed to fly their F-86F to Las Vegas for our second day, Monday, activities. The location, yet to be determined, will be at Nellis AFB or Henderson Airport. That day's activities are still in the planning and approval stage. Updates will be posted on our web site, sabre-pilots.org and in our next issues of our Sabre Jet Classics to published in the Summer and Fall of 2017.

Sign-in starts 10 AM Sunday April 23th, followed by a Cocktail Party 5PM to 7:00 PM or longer. For other events see the registration form.

Our business meeting to be conducted after our breakfast brunch on Tuesday, 25 April will be relatively short as our prime area of discussion will be the presentation of the Stand Down procedures of our Association.

Our banquet night guest speaker will not be our usual Nellis AFB Warfare Commander, but will be a speaker that we feel will be more appropriate for our final reunion.



REGISTRATION FORM F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION TWENTY FIRST REUNION, April 23, 24, & 25, 2017 GOLD COAST HOTEL & CASINO, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

LAST NAME _____ FIRST NAME _____ MI _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____

ZIP _____ PHONE () _____ E-MAIL _____

SPOUSE/GUEST, (FIRST & LAST) _____

EVENT	FEE	NO. IN PARTY	TOTALS
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SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2017:

REGISTRATION: Starts at 10 AM MEMBER/SPOUSE/GUEST \$25.00 x _____ = \$ _____

RAFFLE TICKETS (6 for \$5) \$5.00 x _____ = \$ _____

**COCKTAIL PARTY (5PM to 7PM)
Hors D' Oeuvres & Cash Bar \$10.00 x _____ = \$ _____**

MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2017:

**NELLIS DAY \$15.00 x _____ = \$ _____
(Be at Bus for Departure @ TBD)**

Guys and Dolls Luncheon (1230PM – 3:00PM) \$15.00 x _____ = \$ _____

BUFFET Dinner (6:30PM TO 9PM) cash bar \$20.00 x _____ = \$ _____

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2017:

BREAKFAST BUFFET: (9AM TO 11AM) \$16.00 x _____ = \$ _____

**BANQUET (6:30PM to 11pm) cash bar
Petite Filet Mignon & Chicken Breast \$25.00 x _____ = \$ _____**

REUNION FEES - TOTAL \$ _____

MAKE YOUR TRAVEL AND ROOM RESERVATIONS EARLY. Call the GOLD COAST room Reservations @ 1-888 402-6278 or web site <http://www.goldcoastcasino.com/groups>. Identify yourself with the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association and use GROUP CODE "AAIRF86" to receive the Premium \$44 room rate (Deluxe room rate - \$36.00) except Friday and Saturday nights. All reservations must be received by the GOLD COAST by Wednesday MARCH 20, 2017. Mail completed form and check to:

**F-86 Sabre Pilots Association
P.O. Box 34423
Las Vegas, NV 89133-4423**



21st F-86 Sabre Pilots Association Reunion

April 23, 24 & 25, 2017



◀ **336th FIS pilots at Masawa in 1954.**
 (L-R) front – Lts. Art Boyle, Jim Coats, Skip Harrington;
 2nd row – Lt Dick B. Bevan, Capt. Van Fleet,
 Lt. Jack Moothart, Capt. 'Knobby' Walsh, Lt Gus Holiday;
 3rd row – Lts. Ralph Madero, Ernie Parker, Bob Seal,
 Bernie Westfall, Capt. Harry Krieg, Lts. Jim Van Scyoc,
 Gib Wilson, Jim Sims.

plane. The four ships were returning to the field and in the process of joining up when the accident occurred. P.F. was told of the situation by his wingman Bringle. However he didn't bail out until the A/C got completely out of control, spiraling from 20M to 7M feet. O'Hare ejected, but the chute became entangled with the ejection seat resulting in a streamer. Allegedly P.F. landed in a snow bank and was found alive by farmers but died shortly thereafter. A somber mood settled over the squadron, and pilots were cold toward Walsh.

Sunday, February 6th

11:00 – Attended church services with several Squadron mates.
 13:30 – Picked up my motorcycle today. Looks good and runs OK too. I will probably get the hang of it after a few hours. Bill Price, James Van Scyoc, and Bob Hohtanz also bought cycles. We drive them in the snow to the flight line.

Tuesday, February 8th

07:00 – Reported to the line but chances of flying are slim. The "old heads", under direction of Maj. Carr, have started gunnery practice in earnest. They got about five flights off on the gunnery range today.

Weather is terrific. Wish we had more airplanes in commission so the rest of us could fly some instrument hops.

Wednesday, February 9th

04:30am – At Last! I'm "PAD" ready and sitting alert with Lt. Skip Harrington, Lt. Seth Tracy, and Van Scyoc (another "new sport" like me). Our Squadron Mission is defense of the air-drome and Northern Japan. Soviet aircraft come over towards Japan daily to test our electronic order of battle. They are looking for holes in our radar detection and early warning systems. Our main interest has been to get the new men combat ready, and then we can concentrate on squadron gunnery practice.

05:55am – As I was returning to the flight shack from my pre-flight, we received a scramble alert. Harrington and I ran for our planes – while strapping in – Tracy gave me an engine

start, and Skip and I were rolling for the runway. It was still dark and the moon was full and bright as we "poured the coal" to our birds and leaped airborne in three minutes flat after receiving the scramble from ADCC (Air Defense Command Center.) We climbed North under GCI (Ground Control Intercept). This was to be a "Dawn Patrol" - weather check and radio check for all GCI. There were no enemy bogies about. At 06:30 we shot a practice intercept on two F-86's out of Chitose Air Base on Hokkaido.

The intercept worked out well. Returned to base and landed at 07:10am. Just in time for breakfast at the alert pad. We have our own chef and kitchen. Our chop was good. Skip and I ate like starved dogs. "Tiger" the cook really takes pride in his work and manages to bring extra food all the time. Tiger is S/Sgt in food service. When he was stationed at Nellis, AFB, NV, he moonlighted in the Desert Inn Casino kitchen on the strip. He wears a white kerchief with gold Desert Inn Medallion around his neck. His sidekick is "Sidney". Later on in alert duty we taught Tiger to start our F-86 airplanes during a scramble, which he loved doing. We went off alert duty at 17:31 (30 minutes after sunset). We are truly day fighter pilots.

One thing about this business Our rubber canvas survival suits become extremely oppressive during the long alert duty.

Thursday, February 10th

08:00 – I took OD duty for Lt. John Harrison who is on TDY down south taking the escape and evasion course. We will all take it sometime. I followed the routine that was set down for the Officer of the Day, and there was little of interest that occurred. The weather was exceptionally bad with visibility restricted to 10 feet.

Saturday, February 12th

08:00 – Reported to the line despite heavy snow flurries. Nothing stops the Air Force! No flying was done today and we went on stand down at noon.

19:00 – Dinner at the Club, and what started out as a quiet evening developed into a riotous song fest at the bar. The “Fabulous Rocketeers” were in good voice as we bellowed forth the fighter pilot songs.

Monday, February 14th, Valentines Day

05:00 am. – A strong storm struck - winds of excessive velocity woke everyone in the barracks. Snow showers in early morning prevented flights, but by 10:00 a few flights were airborne. High winds still persist. I don't have a chance of getting up today.

Mustache is looking better every day. I am using 42 degree ski wax for control and shaping. I wish to grow a “handlebar” stash.

Tuesday, February 15th

04:30 am. – Pad Alert. We reported to the line; Harrington, Tracy, Van Scyoc, and me. The snow is falling rapidly, and soon our nice birds are coated with a layer of snow and ice. The crewmen had just towed the birds out of the warmer hanger. The snow melts on impact and then freezes. I dislike fumbling around in the dark trying to pre-flight and start the bird – and the snow just adds to the difficulty. We start up and taxi to the east end alert pad. I just follow the tracks of the bird ahead of me since the taxi ways are obscured even with marker lights.

Tiger arrives and fixes a ranch hand breakfast as usual. Ceiling is 200', visibility ¼ mile. We don't scramble on the “Dawn Patrol”.

12:43 – Tracy and Sock scramble on a practice intercept and return without incident.

16:35 – Harrington and I scramble on a practice intercept. We run some intercepts on “Sharpie” – an F-86Dog, and return the field together. The weather has closed in and now we have to earn our flight pay. I am on Skip's wing and Sharpie has joined on the other wing. The three of us stack it in tight for a



◀ Lt. Bob Seal buzzes the photographer at Remote Auxiliary Field NW, Honshu Island in 1956.

GCA. The penetration from high cone is totally obscured like the inside of a milk bottle. At 2000' Sharpie sees a hole and breaks for the field since he is skosh on fuel. Harrington and I continue under GCA control and night has fallen. We land out of the GCA, touching down in wingtip formation. Skip was great on the gages and we got a very good GCA from the controllers.

20:00 – Western Night at the club. Japanese western bands entertainment is very good. Shades of San Antonio!

Wednesday, February 16th

08:00 – Report to the line but weather is foul. Weather continues to snow all day so we go on stand down. Some men went hunting and bagged three birds.

Friday, February 18th

04:15 – Pad Alert. The weather is terrible! Snow is coming down thick and the winds are 35 knots.

Saturday, February 19th

Bad weather continues and the squadron is on stand down.

19:00 – This evening we had good entertainment at the club with a jazz concert.

Sunday, February 20th

11:00 – Church, followed by brunch. The weather is overcast with snow and rain showers.

The nurse's quarters burned down this morning. No injuries.

Monday, February 21st

04:15 – It is snowing heavily. We report to the line but keep our birds in the hangar. It looks like we won't fly today. Harrington, VanScyoc, Tracy and I have the alert duty today. Tiger brought the food to the Ops Building.

08:00 – Weather is still bad and the aircraft remain in the hangars.

09:30am – A fire broke out in the POL dump where our jet fuel is stored. It is believed a person who was inspecting the storage tanks, opened a lid on top of a tank, and a static spark from his shoes or clothing set off the explosion. He was never found.

16:30 – Weather let up and Skip and Sock are airborne on practice scramble. I checked my bird, #780, hoping Tracy and I would get up when the first element returned. No luck.

Tuesday, February 22nd, Washington's Birthday

It is a holiday at the base. Several of us took our motorcycles off base and toured the country, and shopped downtown.

Thursday, February 24th

08:30 – This morning two ships that were down here from Hokkaido representing the 334th FIS for the coming gunnery meet, were returning to Chitose AB. The two pilots decided to dog fight on the way home. The fight was going full swing and “Harry” James pulled up to do a vertical role, when his wingman smashed his canopy against the belly of James' aircraft. James crawled out of his soldering wreckage at the peak of the flight curve upwards.

The other pilot rode his plane to the ground apparently unconscious and was killed. Air rescue picked James up in good condition, about 500' from where his aircraft plowed in – with only slight bruises, wind burn, etc.

19:00 – Sayonara Party at the Club for Capt Krieg

Friday, February 25th

08:00 – Airborne with Lt. Frank Wilson on a AAA tracking mission over Misawa. We have cleared off on a tactical clearance. The ceiling is about 3000' broken and we request a GCI control climb out on course 040, through the soup. Frank's compass and radio compass are inoperative, but mine are ok. If the field is socked in when we return I will lead the instrument approach. We broke out of the clouds on the climb out at 7500' and the sky was clear in all directions. Flight was uneventful, and following completion we landed out of a normal pattern.

Saturday, February 26th

07:30 – Four ship A-4 Mission with Lt's Harrington, Boyle, Wilson, and self. (“Husky” Flight) The birds weren't ready to go so there was a thirty minuet delay getting off.

During run-up on the active, Boyle's plane was leaking fuel from the right wing. I took his position on Harrington's wing, and we released brakes, streaking down the runway at 130 knots – with Wilson following. As Harrington and I broke ground, our gear doors remained down. Hydraulic systems don't work well in cold climates. We slowed the birds down to



▲ The 336th FIS Gunnery Team won the 39th AD Gunnery Meet in 1955. (L-R) Lts. Ralph Madera, Gene Taft, Bob Seal, B/G James Guthrie, CO of 39th AD, and Lt. Bernie Westfall, Team Captain.

180kts and continued on our climbing turn to the left out of traffic. Upon recycling, the doors closed OK and we continued the mission. Meanwhile Boyle took off and joined up on Wilson in #4 slot.

We climbed to 40M and looked for “Boxer” flight, two clean F-86's. Our flight integrity was good and “Boxer” remained at 47M looking for an opening. Unable to spot them, we started to hassle with ourselves – Harrington and I against Wilson and Boyle. Suddenly “Boxer” flight swooped down and snipped up Husky 1 & 2. I hadn't been clearing at six o'clock. After “Boxer” bugged home on low fuel, we engaged “Galahad Mike” – two aircraft from the alert pad. We soundly hacked them, working as a four ship team again. We returned to Misawa and made a good fly-by in finger tip formation.

Sunday, February 27th

11:00 – Church with Marvin Lindsey, Billy Britton, and some of the gang. Britton is generous and always fills the collection plate with \$10.00 MCP's (military payment certificates) he says “for all those bastards that don't go to church”. These funds are from Britton's winnings at the Friday night poker parties. I've seen him bluff and win \$600-700 pots when he had nothing. But whenever he did get called ... he had the cards. It was amazing.

Billy has one dresser drawer in his barracks room that is devoted to stacks of these MPC's. Raysan, his house boy, takes great pride in keeping the notes in very neat stacks. Britton just handles money like it was dirt, and throws it around by the handful.

At church today he leaned over to one of the unfortunate poker players who owed him money and said “I'll take that cashmere sweater you're wearing.”

Monday, February 28th

08:00 – All hands report to the line but there is little chance

that we will fly. Ceiling and visibility is 0 - 0 (rain & fog). A bad day indeed.

Tuesday, February 29th

08:00 - Reported to the line and the weather is showing signs of breaking up. Scattered cloud layers with frequent openings. Lt. Tracy and I are airborne at 09:40 on an instrument hop in the local area. The ceiling is a ragged 3000", no openings at the time, so we remained VFR under the scud and I flew close formation for 30 minutes. We called tower for permission to shoot some GCAs and made four of them. I flew lead on three GCAs. They were pretty good except GCA final controller was heavily garbled and tended to bring us in slightly to the right.

Saturday, March 1st

0-8:00 - Reported to flight line for a classified mission with Lt.'s Jim Chapman and Vic Bringle. We were off on a tactical clearance at 10:10. We flew practice AAA/track for U.S. Army troops down south. The mission was smooth and we made a weather penetration on return to Misawa. Gear came up on me in the penetration turn inbound. I went around, recycled the gear, entered an SFO pattern and landed without further incident.

12:45 - A crewman was sucked into A/C # 912 at 80% RPM. He was making an engine run up inspection. It is cold, and he was wearing a quilted parka. He had stepped in front of the engine with his hood on and hadn't seen how close he was. He was pulled out immediately after engine shut down and lived about 3-4 hours. He died from ruptured lungs, dislocated heart, concussion, etc. Hewrapped around the "dog pecker". The engine screens kept him from going into the compressor blades. One shoe was left on the ground when he was sucked in. I was appointed Summary Court Officer by Captain Ed Thomas, or new Ops Officer, and the settling of his private affairs and personal effects.

Sunday, March 2nd

03:45 - I got up for alert duty. My airplane today is #541, a difficult airplane to trim properly. All airplanes have their own personality. This airplane is an older F-86E with a mind of its own. At 05:35 Chapman and Westfall scrambled on the dawn patrol weather check.

Frank Wilson and I scrambled at 10:07, and intercepted an F-86F from Chitose - made a pass on him, and headed south under GCI control to intercept another bogie sixty miles from Misawa base. The aircraft was a Navy Banshee jet fighter on a navigational flight flying at 29M feet. We were flying at 25M feet. When we got a tally ho on him we opened the throttles on our F-86's closing on him from six o'clock low at remarkable speed. When we jumped him he was surprised complete.

March 5th

In as much as there have been no entries for this and the following months, I shall use this space to give a brief history for the Squadron for the period named.

For the most part, March was a good month for flying operations. Weather proved to be some of the best we have had while at Misawa. Occasional cumulous build-ups resulting in scattered showers, but generally field conditions were good. We logged 871 total hours for March, and most of this was F-86 time with exception of 34 hours of T-33A time. Low T-33 time came about as a result of T-33 # 621 becoming magnetized and declared unsafe for IFR flight as instruments were subsequently screwed up. T-33 # 313 carried the load, but was AOCOP most of the month for making an engine change.

We have two Squadron pets. One dog named by Skip Harrington as "Sturdley Burdeux", and a parakeet named "Sabre Sam".

Harrington has the dog paged at the club as "Lt. Sturdley Burdeux you have a telephone call".

March 19th

This was an exciting day for the Rocketeers! The Pad had a hot scramble and was vectored over the Sea of Japan in the NW area where Russian airplanes were flying about in a tizzy. Evidently one of their aircraft had gone into the drink, and they were flying cap on it. Our boys were vectored in to close proximity by GCI. The flight jettisoned tanks in preparation to engage, if necessary. It wasn't and they returned to the field where our Tactical Inspection was in full swing. Pilots were flying simulated combat missions refueling their own planes and turning them around for another sortie.

14:00 - Operations ceased for the day and a large party was thrown in the hangar for pilots and crewmen. Col. Elder, 39th Air Division CO dropped by and had a social with us.

April 8th

07:00 - Reported to the line for a four ship simulated combat mission. Capt. Dick Bevan and Lt. Bernie Westfall comprised the lead element and I flew top cover by myself as our number 4 aborted. A beautiful day with scattered cloud layers that became thick as we climbed on heading 330 degrees at 0.75 Mach. We leveled at 40M feet - 0.85 Mach.



▲ Lt Bob Seal by his F-86E, "Portland Rose", at Misawa in 1956.

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▲ Aerial view of Misawa AB, Japan in 1956.

We pulled tremendous contrails at this altitude. As we progressed north I tried to navigate by looking thorough breaks in the cloud cover below us, and to identify points on the ground. Bevan was mistaken; it came to me, about what our position was. I was sure we were along the bay off North Hokkaido. We tuned SE still holding a high Mach and passed along the Kurils. I was ever vigilant for Mig's. We would have seen them coming a long way off with these cons. Not finding any aircraft to bounce, we split up and I tangled with Bevan and Westfall. I managed to bend it around on Bernie for some good gun film. This simulated combat was taking place over the Sea of Okhotsk opposite Sakhalin Island ... we were a long way from home.

I know Russian radar was watching the affair with much interest, no doubt. I was down to 1500# when we broke it off at 20M feet.

After join up I had 1200# and Bevan started for Misawa. I gave him a call and suggested we land at Chitose AB as I had minimum fuel. We landed at 10:30. I shut down with 450#.

April 11th

We learn that our squadron, the 336th Rocketeers, will deploy to K-14 in May in May and take provisions for sustained operations. This is the old home base of the 4th Fighter Wing during the Korean War.

Thursday, May 5th

We are on the way. We take Lt. "Sturdley Burdeux", our mascot dog, and "Sabre Sam" the pet parakeet. Sturdley travels in the C-119. "Sabre Sam" travels tucked into a sock, with just his head sticking out on the chest of MacLaren's flight suit.

We land at our new home away from home; K-14. After securing the flight line, with A/C in their revetments, the pilots load their gear into trucks that will take us to our quarters. It is late afternoon. As I stand in the back of the large six-by truck with other pilots we make our way down a dirt road toward our billets. There is a single individual jogging down the road dead ahead coming towards us, attired in shorts and sweat shirt. As

our truck nears, he comes to the center of the road with his arms raised, and brings us to a stop. He says he's the base commander (US Army Brigadier) and heard that we fighter jocks think we are pretty tough guys and like to raise hell. He said he wanted us to know who was boss, and that if we got out of line on his base, he could take care of us without any problem. Welcome to K-14.

Sunday May 8th

All hands turned out for a trip to Seoul. Cameras were in order, and the day was tops in all respects. Seoul was interesting - many buildings reflect the bitter struggle that took place - especially the Capitol building. It is similar to and equally nice as a large majority of our state Capitols. However, Seoul was the scene of much fighting and the structure now is but a hollow shell of pock marked granite. Records and archives had been destroyed, etc. Jim Coats and I clambered around in the wreckage and took pictures.

Monday, May 9th

Had chow at our mess hall. Our barracks are former Japanese Officers quarters built in the 1930's. K-14 is a good field with many revetments. At present we are the only squadron in the base and are located on the old 4th Group side of the field and have rehabilitated the Operations building.

This is the field where many sorties were flown during the height of the war ... and has once again been activated. We're just south of the demilitarized zone. We are here to provide air superiority to South Korea, and to fly escort missions for RB-45s which are photographing the North Korean violations of the cease fire. North Korea continues to build up their military installations in violation of the agreement.

Our RB-45 Missions go north along the coast photographing these installations with oblique cameras. We fly top cover.

07:30 - Reported to the line and took A/C #577 out to the harmonization range to get the guns sighted in.



▲ Lt. Jim Van Scyoc sitting in front of Ops at Kimpo in May 1955

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▲ The entire 336th FIS pose for the official photograph at Misawa AB during the Winter of 1956

15:30 – Tracy and I were airborne in the T-Bird #313 for a look around at the local area. We visited K-13, K-55, K-6, and K-8. All remarkable fields. We returned to K-14 and shot instrument approaches. Tracy (one of the “old heads”) is familiar with K-14, having flown out of here before. He was careful to point out “Witches Tit”, a particular hazard during instrument approaches in weather if you are not lined up with the runway.

It does resemble a mammary gland in silhouette.

**Monday, May 23rd, 1955,
Kimpo, Korea, K-14 Air Base**

Robert Hohtanz was killed today. He was booming the flag in a clean F-86.

It is 1700 hours, I’m returning to quarters from the flight line, standing in the back of a six-by. I hear a sonic boom, look skyward and see an F-86. I’m looking at the belly of the airplane in plan view. The aircraft has gone from a vertical sonic dive, to a full stop, by swapping ends. The aircraft leveled itself and I see a pilot who has bailed out floating downward.

Booming the flag at close of day was a custom and privilege very much desired. We competed each day to see who could be the most accurate on timing the boom to 1700 hours. Early was no good – late was worse! The F-86 had “tucked” at sonic speed. I have never seen such an extreme maneuver performed by any aircraft. The g-forces must have been horrendous. The F-86, having righted itself, continued pilotless across the base at about 1000 feet altitude passing in front of our truck f. The engine was running at retarded power setting, emitting a deep guttural growl ... a sound I,d never heard before. There was no smoke or fire visible – until it crashed. Bob Hohtanz suffered

massive head injuries and did not survive.

Bob was a friend and we hung out together. He played the piano whenever he found one. Sometimes I would pick the gut bucket hopefully in tempo to his playing. We talked about things – one of the subjects being – “when do you leave the airplane”. I always favored sticking with the airplane to the very last. Bob was almost blasé about ejecting as if it was a carnival ride. He said at the first sign of trouble, I’m pulling the “next of kin” handles. I’m not sticking around. I don’t know if that attitude influenced the outcome of what happened that fateful day.. It was later determined that the engine turbine buckets in the hot section had blown during the dive. When that happened it must have been a shock for pilot and airplane. Bob’s almost instantaneous bail-out at that moment was made under extreme conditions of speed and g-forces.

August 1955, Misawa Air Base, Japan

One of the F-86Dog pilots landed gear up on his drop tanks – he hit the afterburner and sailed down the runway with huge rooster tails of sparks following. He got airborne and made a normal landing. The drop tanks were shaved down almost to the pylons.

The 4th Fighter Interceptor Squadron Ops Officer took off in the airplane and pickled the shaved tanks into the ocean two miles from base avoiding an incident report to higher command.

September 1955, Misawa Air Base

We had a “new sport” arrive from stateside, fresh from pilot training, but with no experience in the F-86 Sabre. Following his T-33 orientation ride, he was given his first F-86 chase ride.

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▲ Lt. Bob Seal and his trusty Crew Chief, Sgt. Jim ‘Stretch’ Richards, at Misawa in the Winter of 1955.



▲ Lt. Ray Keating holds the squadron pet “Galahad” (one of the 336th call signs) outside the Ops building at K-14 in May 1955. Who says fighter pilots don’t have a soft side?



▲ Major Bruce Carr sits under the “MiG Alley 200 Miles” sign at Kimpo in May 1956.



▲ Lt. Bob Hohtanz under the “Mig Alley” torii at K-14 in May 1955.



◀ “Bring on the MiGs!”, K-14 May 1955. (L-R) Lts. Gib Wilson, Lou Gang, Ralph Kitchens, Marvin Lindsey, Johnson, Jackie Moothart, Jim Coats, Ray Keating.

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▲ Lt. Bob Hohtanz's ejection seat and other debris, following his crash in May 1955 at K-14.

Returning to Misawa for landing, the pilot crashed on final when his airspeed got so low that the aircraft quit flying and slid off sideways into pine trees. The airplane clipped through the tree trunks, losing parts, but remaining upright. The final stop was abrupt and the pilot, who would have survived, was struck by a section of fuselage paneling that sliced into the cockpit. He had only been on the base less than a week and I had not met him. The crew chief cried and was inconsolable.

Our crew chiefs' took their jobs seriously. We did not have centralized maintenance yet. All crew chiefs went through regular maintenance intervals in the hangar with their aircraft. They knew their plane better than anybody else. My crew chief was Sgt. Jim "Stretch" Richards from Texas. He was tall and lean. "Our" F-86F was # 464. Jim found some WWII wing wax in the hangar. He waxed our plane until it shined. He said it would help me go faster and come out on top in a dog fight.

November 1955, Misawa Air Base, Japan

Maj. Bruce Carr and Capt. William H. Nelson launched on a mission in foul weather as a two ship element. The rest of the squadron was standing down. Weather was 200' and 1/16 mile visibility. When the two planes returned from the mission we were socked in with torrential rain. We heard them go by on the first GCA. The GCA controllers could not paint the aircraft clearly because of the heavy rain. On the second attempt the aircraft passed over the ramp between our Ops building and the runway. Bruce and Bill headed for Chitose Air Base on Hokkaido. The weather at Chitose was 30M feet overcast with a 10M foot ceiling over the base. As they arrived over Chitose under GCI assist and "Bird Dogs" working (Radio Direction Finder), both pilots flamed out. They declared dead stick landings, and became separated in the clouds. Figuring that the base was beneath them, both pilots spiraled down, breaking out at different ends of the runway. The alert tower operator saw them and broad cast "both aircraft take the right". Bruce

and Bill waved as they passed midfield in their after landing roll.

1956 Misawa Air Base, Japan

A Wing of SAC B-47s from Mountain Home, arrived; fourteen of them. We'd never seen B-47's up close. After a short visit they departed. We fighter jocks all watched closely as the B-47's lined up for the active runway. The commander instructed all planes to burn fuel down at the end of the runway so as to match calculated weight for take off. Wind was five knots straight down the runway. Lead took off and used every bit of the 12,000 foot runway, and part of the overrun. Lead radioed back for all planes to burn down more fuel before take off. And they did. But even so the fourth B-47 did not make it; crashing off the end of the runway into scrub pines. I think one of the crew survived.

July 1956, Misawa Air Base, Japan

Jimmy Coats and I scrambled from the alert pad under GCI control. It was a hot scramble intercept. Russian aircraft were headed our way from Vladivostok. We left the planes down at telephone pole height and followed the rail road tracks, - throttles to the fire wall - NW toward the Sea of Japan. I wanted to keep us low so the Russian radar picket ships couldn't see us coming. Neither could GCI. They didn't know where we were. We popped up at altitude a lot closer than expected to the bogies.

The Russians turned back, and GCI had our element loiter in a race track pattern until I called minimum fuel. We were then vectored to a small recovery base near the western shore of Honshu. After landing and while refueling, we had lunch in the flight line mess. The base photographer came to us with a request for a low pass over the ramp on departure, and he would take a picture. I asked how low? He said as low as you can go. I said if I did that he would cut and run. He said I won't.



▲ Lts. Bob Seal (L) and Bob Hohtanz under the torii at K-14 in May 1955.

I said you know it is against regulations? The photographer said not to worry, the Base Commander is a 2nd Lt. and "he's one of us". Besides, he continued, he is out hunting pheasant today. I said "you're on".

I took the bird wide out on the base to final turn as I wanted to ease it down to avoid a "sink". The thermals were really pounding and I could feel the fuel sloshing back and forth in the fuel tanks and drops. It was enough to make the plane "fishtail". I rolled in lots of nose up trim and had to use firm forward pressure on the stick. Advancing to full power I came screaming down the ramp and passed over the photographer at about 15 feet. He sent me a copy of the photograph which is truly amazing. He did not flinch.

August 1956, Misawa Air Base, Japan A Near Death Experience

We were airborne as a flight of four F-86's doing routine GCI intercepts as elements. I was flying right wing on my flight leader. Lt. Frank Wilson was leading the other element and Lt. Vic Bringle was on his wing. We finished working with GCI, and prepared to head home to Misawa as the hour was late and the sun was setting. We'd been working our intercepts above a cloud layer that extended from 28M feet all the way down to two thousand feet, solid all the way. Lead and I were level at 30M and headed due east. Wilson was off to our left, not yet in sight, level at 30M headed due south. (We didn't know each others position) We were going home as individual elements. As such we were on different radio channels as we'd been while working with GCI. The setting sun was behind us. Lead and I proceeded on our collision course with Wilson and Bringle. Neither element was aware of the other. From my position on lead's right wing (I was tucked in close because we were going into the murk shortly) I had a clear view of the other element moving in from our left.

I called "bogies 10 o'clock level". Lead's head was turning but he didn't have them. I called "bogies 11 o'clock - still no acknowledgement from lead. Now I could see at this point how well we were set up for a four-ship mid-air. Our element was coming out of the west with the sun on our tail. There was no way that Wilson or Bringle could see us. I called "bogies 11:30". I still had no response from lead. I figured the safest thing to do would be to pass underneath the other element since their natural instinct would be to pull back on the stick if they should

happen to see us at the last micro-second. So I called "Dick! Take it down, take it down". I rolled in nose down trim until my eyeballs nearly popped out of my head, simultaneously chopping the throttle and popping speed brakes. This set of actions gave some separation from lead, who unbelievably finally woke up and saw the formation in his windscreen; he then broke into me. Airplanes don't turn around a spot they slide around a spot when you do a roll. And that is what happened in this case. By previous actions separating me somewhat from lead, no part of his plane hit my plane when he pulled this crazy maneuver. Lead had slid up on top of me inverted. We were now canopy to canopy, and as I looked up I could see the red lights of his instrument panel glowing. I could see his clinched fist on the stick getting ready to haul it back in his gut as we passed underneath Wilson and Bringle - (Lead fully inverted on top of me.) Bringle and Wilson were totally unaware of the life and death struggle going on underneath the belly of their aircraft. I couldn't apply any more negative "g's".

The early action I had taken to get separation from lead slid me rearward enough so that when lead descended on me he passed 15 feet in front of my nose. To avoid the jet blast from his engine snuffing out my engine, I applied right rudder and skewed my nose out of alignment with his exhaust. One cannot believe the noise and blast of a jet engine a few feet from your bullet proof windscreen so close to your face. Not many people get to share that view and live. How my plane did shudder as lead bathed me in his exhaust fumes.

Now we were separating into the thick cloud cover below; and suddenly it is night. I take evasive action guessing where lead may be. We still may collide in the soup. My artificial horizon has tumbled. I applied right stick for more separation. I could tell I was going straight down because I was hanging in the straps. I eased some power back in and left the speed brakes out.

Relying on needle/ball and airspeed plus seat of the pants feel, I leveled the wings and put in a positive 4 g pullout; in came the speed brakes and full throttle. I squirted up out of the clouds to 30M feet as the sun was just setting. My legs were trembling so badly from fright that I could not keep them on the rudder pedals. Lead was totally oblivious as to what he had done. I could hear lead calling for join up but I ignored him and went home alone, glad to still be alive.



MOST Memorable Experience

336th FIS, 4th FIW

By Frank Robison



13th Combat Mission - Scheduled as Dignity White 2, flying wing for Captain Chandler. On patrol over the Chongchon River at 32,000 ft heading north in a 16 aircraft, finger four of four flights. Formation Red leader called, "180 left" and flights began standard 180 turns. But for no reason, White Lead (Chandler) rolled out after 90 degrees of turn. Red, Blue, and Green Flights completed the 180 degree turn and headed south. I saw 24 MiGs at 12 o'clock about 20 miles, slightly high and reported same to White Lead who called, "White flight, drop tanks." White 2 and 4 cleaned, but White 1 and 3 had hung right wing tanks. White Lead called, "White 4 (who was on his first combat mission), join on White 2 as an element." I was an element leader! White Lead and 3 turned south as regulations called for any aircraft with a hung tank to RTB. Red Leader called "Dignity Red here, drop tanks," then, "180 left".

I started a shallow dive toward the 24 MiGs which were in six flights of four, in trail formation, making a diving right turn toward a squadron of F-80s cutting a rail about 50 miles east of the Yalu River. As we slowly closed the range, I called, "White 4, you take 12 and I'll take 12. Careful about your ammo." I spotted 16 more MiGs in trail (4 flights of 4) going east. They continued eastward and encountered 12 Sabres and White 1 and 3, who had dropped their "hung" tanks. Result 4 MiGs downed, no damage to any Sabres.

We closed to about 2 miles behind the last 4 of the 24 MiGs. Another flight of 16 following the first 16 appeared. My wingman was showing the J-47 black smoke because we'd descended to below 16,000 feet (MiGs do not smoke at any altitude). The 16 MiG formation began a steep dive at our 3 o'clock toward us. Decision Time! In less than one minute, the 24 MiGs would be on top of the F80s, so I put the pipper of the gun sight about 20 pipper widths above the lead flight of four and fired a short burst which had a lot of tracers. Like a covey of quail, the MiGs broke right, left, and up! The last flight dove slightly and turned right. They were the only MiGs I could possibly get a shot at, so I cut them off. I called White 4 and he answered, "I'm right with you!" I couldn't see him but was closing rapidly on the four MiGs. In another five seconds, I would be in range.

Just as I started to fire, red cannon balls filled the area around my Sabre. Six of the MiGs in the 16 ship flight were all firing at -- us! I broke hard right and up called, "White four, where are you?" White 4 answered, "Right behind you." Pulling about six "Gs," I glanced back. I could see White 4's wing-tip about twenty feet below and behind my tail. (When we landed, I asked him why he was so close and he said, "They would have to shoot through you to hit me!") The attacking MiGs were overshooting in the turn, so I rolled left and slid astern but another barrage of red cannon fire surrounded us. Break left! Again, these four MiGs were going so fast that they overshot us. A sharp reverse put us sliding inside their turn and closing. Short lived! More cannon fire going by.

During six more of these maneuvers, I observed four MiGs shooting at two MiGs! However no MiGs were going down after the withdrawing F-80s! On a turn diving down sun, I called White 4, "Move out when I reverse to the left." I reversed and White 4 slide out. The six MiGs behind us had slowed their closing rate so as I came toward the sun, I pulled up into a sixty degree climb and called, "Hold this climb until we hammer-head to the left." As we fell off to our left, I watched the

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MiGs below us turning westward toward the Yalu. They had lost us in the sun. They were climbing and would reach the border before we were in range to fire.

I began a shallow right turn as White 4 called, "Bingo", he was at minimum fuel. As we turned past east, I saw four F-84s flying in a defensive "wheel" with two MiGs "Yo-yoing" from above. We switched to their frequency and called, "We are two Sabres west and below you. We'll take the MiGs." The flight leader answered, "OK, but don't point your noses at us!" As we closed the MiG pilots saw us and quickly pulled up, heading for the Yalu. The four F-84s rolled out into a finger four formation heading east. We turned south to go home.

White 4 was on my left wing in spread formation. I checked his six o'clock and saw six MiGs in a sixty degree dive toward him. I called, "Push over, dive!" I put my nose down about 45 degrees and realized White 4 was only diving about ten to fifteen degrees. He was looking for the MiGs. I yelled, "Push over steep!" He immediately dove and red cannon balls filled the space he left. I called, "Break right," and he did. As soon as he started his right turn, I made a hard left turn (Navy Training). I would come around and make a head-on pass. I hoped my guns came to bear before theirs were on me. About two seconds before decision time, a burst of machine gun fire from my right and high. The four F-84s had seen the MiGs attacking us and were line abreast, all four firing! The MiGs broke right and headed for the Yalu. I changed channels and thanked the F-84 Flight. Mission Complete. To Home -- K-13

Never Trust the Weather Man

By Bob Matasick



PART ONE

Three of our F-86s were in the maintenance shop when all the others departed for Kadena. So three of us - Lowell Ward, Bill Burkett, and myself - were assigned to go back to Clark via MATS and bring back the three airplanes.

During the pre-flight walk-around, a crack was discovered in the windshield of one of the birds. That took several days to repair. Finally we were ready to go again when the weather moved in. And since the flight was a two hour one which would require almost all our fuel, and with no alternate landing sites available, we remained at Clark until we had a good weather forecast. Finally, after a couple of days, the weather man decreed that we'd have clear weather all the way to Kadena.

We took off in the sunshine and climbed out to 40,000. All was going well for the first hour, but then we began picking up a pretty solid undercast and towering cumulus that almost reached us at 40,000 feet. We continued on our way with intentions of making a weather descent at Kadena. We were approximately 20 minutes out when Lead, Lowell Ward, thought he had station passage and made a dive for a small hole in the cloud deck. The two of us followed him down until we broke

out at about 300 feet above the whitecaps with approximately 600 pounds of fuel left - and no land in sight!

Kadena radar advised we were still 65 miles away, so we had a few choices to make. We could climb higher to reduce the rate of fuel consumption, but that would burn up fuel in the climb. We could continue at a higher speed which would enable us to climb to a safe bail-out altitude after the inevitable flameout. Or we could throttle back to about 85%, which was a compromise between the first two choices. We chose the last alternative and chugged along through the mist while searching like crazy for land.

Finally we spotted land at our 10 o'clock - Naha AB, an F-86D base on the southern part of Okinawa, There was no way we could make Kadena on the middle of the island. We formed into a trail formation and made a very short turn to the runway heading. We all made it down OK, but I can't remember if we had enough fuel to taxi to the ramp, or weather we flamed out on the way. Never the less, all's well that ends well. Never trust the weatherman!

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PART TWO

Carroll Blum and I were scheduled for the morning alert shift one day, but that didn't stop us from sharing the evening before with two Red Cross girls. We were having a few drinks and a lot of laughs when someone decided that we should make a pizza. I don't recall what we used to bake the pizza, but I do remember that we, Blum and I, decided that we should add a little more garlic for flavor.

On the next batch, with a few more drinks under our belts, we decided that even more garlic was in order. I think that we did that several more times, with a few beers between each time, and before we knew it, it was midnight. It was at that point in time that Blum came up with a brilliant thought to check the weather office for the morning forecast. If the weather was going to be overcast and rainy, we'd never be scrambled and could spend our time sacked out in the alert shack. Sure enough, the forecast was exactly what we'd hoped for, so we partied on until about two in the morning when sanity prevailed. We departed to get a couple hours of sleep before we had to report.

Needless to say, it was two sleepy pilots who made their way to the alert pad that morning. Once there, I followed the protocol of preparing for a two minute takeoff. This consisted of a pre-flight inspection of the plane and then preparing the cockpit – putting the parachute in place in the seat, attaching the chute to the seat cushion dinghy, putting the straps in a position to permit quick attachment, connecting the helmet to the radio cord and the oxygen mask to the supply line, lowering the flaps to takeoff position. This would permit a minimal delay if an alarm sounded. While the pilot would be strapping in, the

crew chief would stand on the wing and lean into the cockpit to start the engine. The tower would clear the runway so that the alert birds could be off and up to find the source of the problem, often a Philippine airline pilot that was off course.

After I completed the ritual, I entered the alert shack and lay down on a bunk. I'm not certain how long I was lying there when I realized that Blum hadn't come in. I went to the door and saw him in the cockpit with the crew chief hovering over him. I asked what the problem was and the crew chief responded, "Lt. Blum is asleep, sir!"

"Wake him up!" was my quick response. "Oh no sir, I couldn't do that." I walked out to the plane and shouted to Blum to wake up. That startled him a little, and he did move and giggle a little. Then he went on to complete his preparations. Finally he came into the shack, and we both sacked out on the bunks.

I'm not sure how long we lay there before we were awakened by the alarm clang. We both leaped out the bunks and ran to the planes in a wash of bright sunlight. There wasn't a cloud in the sky. In no time at all, we were airborne and on our way to find the deviant cause of the alarm. Unfortunately, all that garlic we'd consumed a few hours prior, came back at us in a gaseous form. And when your nose and mouth are covered with an oxygen mask, it's tough to get away from "the attack of the garlic". It didn't take us too long to intercept the wandering Philippine airliner, but then it was a matter of flying around until we burned enough fuel to permit a landing. Finally we were back on the ground, vowing to never trust a weatherman again.

this n' that



On this page of "this 'n that" are photos of Mobile Control units at Suwon AB, South Korea during the war. Since there are only two squadrons shown, the 16th and 25th Squadrons, we can assume that the photos were taken prior to July 1952 when the 39th FIS transitioned to F-86E/F Sabres and was assigned to the 51st FIG.

These mobile control vehicles were all built very similar, using a Dodge ¾ ton truck for power; then having a plywood box built to house the radios and other equipment. Some had an opening in the roof which was often cover with an old bombardier nose, such as used on the B-26C in Korea. But none were built to last or for show. Just something cover the controller in fowl weather. (cred – Warren Thompson collection)



ANNOUNCING

The 21st and FINAL Reunion of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association. To be held on April 23/24/25, 2017 at the Gold Coast Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada.

This will be the best reunion ever!

★ *Be There!* ★

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◀ **WHO IS IT?**

We won't even ask you guys to ID the pilot gracing our last page in this issue. No one had the answer for the "Who Is It?" On the last page of 23-1. So we repeated it in full color on the front cover of this issue. The pilot is none other than Bob Hoover, and Mr. Mick Roth captured Bob strapping in at the 1980 Reno Air Race before dazzling the spectators.
